



North Chicago commemoration, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk joined veterans to dedicate a memorial honoring African-Americans who served in World War II. The monument also marks a historic moment in naval history – the first 13 African-American naval officers were commissioned here in March of 1944.

The twelve commissioned officers and a warrant officer became known as the “Golden Thirteen”.

“Our monument recognizes the contribution of all members of the Greatest Generation but is unique as the first to honor African-American World War II navy veterans,” said Congressman Kirk addressing an audience of community leaders and veterans. “Our African-American heroes fought three battles: one against the Nazis in the Atlantic, one against the Japanese in the Pacific and one against racists here at home.

It is important that this memorial was built here in front of Great Lakes Naval Training Center where all young Americans who join our Navy will remember these heroes.”

Congressman Kirk secured a \$97,000 federal appropriation to erect the memorial in North Chicago’s Veterans Memorial Park.

Joining Kirk at the ceremony was Susan Sublett, widow of Frank Sublett. During last year’s groundbreaking, Lt. Frank Sublett – the last surviving member of the Golden Thirteen -- presided.

Frank

Sublett passed away this fall.



“While this memorial marks the service of all veterans, I want to pay particular respect to Frank Sublett and his shipmates who paved the way for so many African-Americans to become the leaders of all Americans in uniform. I was honored to stand with Frank when we broke ground on this memorial and am proud to dedicate it today in his honor.”

Members of the Golden Thirteen became naval leaders long before President Truman desegregated the military. “At the time, they were offered no graduation and little thanks for their service to the nation. Frank Sublett and other members of the “Golden 13” paved the way for military leaders like General Colin Powell who later commanded all Americans in uniform.

This memorial provided a formal thank you to so many African-Americans for volunteering to save America from the Nazis and Japanese Empire.”

North Chicago Mayor Leon Rockingham, Ted Hudson, President, Chicago Chapter WWII Black Naval Veterans of Great Lakes, Master Chief Alyoicius Nelson, Recruit Training Command, Naval Station Great Lakes, Leslie Day, Principal, Sutter Day Architects and Dale Villiard, President, Vanderwerff Construction also participated in the dedication.



Although the monument honors all World War II veterans, it has special plaques marking the service of the Golden Thirteen and other prominent African-American military heroes. North Chicago Veterans Memorial Park is dedicated to all who served during World War II.